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Approved For Release 2003/03/04 : CIA-RDP79R00890A000600040005-2

NSC BRIEFING

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7 September 1955

FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

- I. With French Premier Faure's self-established 12 September "deadline" for a solution to the Morocco problem drawing near, the French Cabinet at last accepted his "five-point" program (hammered out in conference with Moroccan nationalist moderates) early last week. The Package program calls for:
 - A. A two-way parlay involving replacement of Moroccan Resident General Grandval by Boyer de Latour and the withdrawal of the present Sultan, Mohamed ben Arafa.
 - B. A three-way parlay: establishment of a "Throne Council," formation of a "representative" government under a Moroccan named by that Council, and return of French-deposed former Sultan ben Youssef from exile in Madagascar to some residence in France.
- II. The first half of Faure's two-way parlay has already been accomplished. However, the second (removal of ben Arafa) is a present stumbling-block in the plan. Faure, together with Minister of Protectorates July, wants ben Arafa to leave immediately, in order to meet the 12 September deadline, and the new Resident General is reportedly pressuring the Sultan.
 - A. Despite formal Cabinet acceptance of Faure's plan, however, at least two cabinet members have reservations. Defense Minister Koenig apparently opposes the Sultan's removal, while Foreign Minister Pinay objects to pressure being applied for Arafa's resignation.

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DOCUMENT NO. 6
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C 1990
NEXT REVIEW DATE:
DATE 16 Jan 80 REVIEWER:

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/03/04 : CIA-RDP79R00890A000600040005-2

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- B. These internal political French tensions, together with aroused public opinion as a result of Moroccan bloodshed, might well threaten Faure's premiership, were the French National Assembly in session. However, the Assembly is not scheduled to reconvene until 4 October and an earlier special session appears improbable.
1. Faure could recall the Assembly, but is obviously better off in its absence.
 2. The "Standing Committee" of the Assembly could also issue a recall, but the Premier's opponents could not win the vote for such an action so long as Faure retains the general support of his coalition.
 3. The third and final means of recall, petition by a majority, is only a remote possibility.
- C. It therefore appears that, even should ben Arafa remain adamant (which seems unlikely), the Faure Government's tenure is safe at least until October.

III. The remaining three of Faure's "five points" also have their pitfalls. Much depends on the reaction of exiled ben Youssef. Two French representatives have conferred with him in Madagascar, while two separate delegations of Moroccan moderates are en route.

- A. Before the Moroccan nationalists will go along with the Faure plan, ben Youssef presumably will have to approve the proposed composition of the "Throng Council," and also give his blessing to whatever Moroccan is to head the "representative" regime.
- B. Finally, ben Youssef's reaction to a "return" which brings him to France, rather than back to the throne, remains to be discovered.

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IV. Meanwhile, nationalist terrorism continues throughout Morocco despite strong French Military and police repression. A general strike, apparently called by the nationalists for 12 September in Casablanca, may well create additional security problems.

A. French military authorities are also concerned over evidence of widespread contact and consultation among the Berber tribes of the interior, upon many of whom the French have previously counted for support.

1. French troops in Morocco now total more than 60,000 and are constantly being reinforced by the arrival of small units from metropolitan France.

2. However, outbursts similar to the 20 August Berber massacre at Qued Zem would severely tax France's thin-spread forces in Morocco.

V. Elsewhere in French North Africa, apprehension exists that a new flare-up is imminent in Algeria, despite the extension of a state of emergency to all four Algerian Departments and the arrival of further troop reinforcements from France.

A. French troops in Algeria now number more than 120,000, supplemented by general and special police units, air force and naval groups and a substantial number of quasi-military units.

1. Some settlers have been armed, despite the objections of the Governor General, and are reported to be taking vigilante action against the natives.

2. following the stiff French reprisals for the 20 August uprisings in the Constantine-Philippeville area, native support for extremist nationalists has become more widespread and stronger and that the situation through

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out the Constantine region remains tense.

- B. Perhaps the most alarming aspect of the present disorders is the tendency among conservative French officials and settlers to make the US, together with Egypt, a scapegoat. Both press comment and private utterances in Morocco and Algeria have been strongly anti-American, to the point of claiming US support for the rebels.

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